

## Changes to Colorado's Remedial Education Policy Proposed by the Remedial Education Policy Review Task Force

### *Summary of key recommendations:*

**1. USE STATE K-12 TEST RESULTS TO HELP DETERMINE REMEDIAL NEEDS.** Colorado colleges and universities have typically relied on ACT or SAT college entrance exam scores and the Accuplacer test to determine whether a student needs remedial classes. This recommendation increases the tests that could be used in making these determinations. Results of PARCC state tests, which will replace the state CSAP/TCAP annual exams in 2014-15, could be used as well as results from Compass and Smarter Balanced tests.

**Why change?** This means Colorado will accept six different tests for determining if a first-time student is college-ready in reading, writing and math. Expanding the number of accepted tests means greater flexibility for higher education institutions and for students in meeting individual needs.

**2. ADOPT DIFFERENTIATED PLACEMENT FOR MATH REMEDIATION.** Students who enroll in Colorado colleges and universities have different education pathways based on their subject of study or major. Soon, students who choose a major related to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, known as STEM, will have different math requirements than those who chose to study non-STEM related subjects. So students' remedial needs will differ based on which education path they select.

**Why change?** Students are currently placed in remediation regardless of what field they plan to study. More than half the students who need remedial courses need help in math. Yet many of these students have not chosen a major related to the math they are being required to learn. This recommendation asks students to plan a course of study based on their individual academic aspirations. It also allows them to change their minds at any point - if they do, they would need to meet the math required in their new chosen field.

**3. REVIEW CUT SCORES FOR DETERMINING REMEDIAL PLACEMENT.** Colorado's current remedial policy includes cut scores for determining remedial placement. For example, a student achieving a 17 on the ACT reading section and an Accuplacer reading comprehension score of 80 is not considered in need of remediation. This recommendation calls for potentially re-setting those cut scores based on a review of student performance in higher education institutions.

**Why change?** State leaders are examining how students fared in classes after the current cut scores were used to determine placement. The results of that review will determine whether the cut scores are revised. Reading and writing would continue to have one set of cut scores to determine placement while math, as described in recommendation #2, would have a series of cut scores based on student needs.